

Washington Christmas Tree Grower Advisory Committee Meeting

April 27, 2016, 10:00 am to noon, WSDA Cleveland Lab, 3939 Cleveland Avenue, Tumwater

Attending: Carolyn Elliott, Greg Hunter, Phil Hunter, Brad Tower

Call in: Bruce Wiseman

Guests: Gary Chastagner, Chris Aldrich

WSDA: Cindy Cooper, Scott Brooks, Lara Massey

Introductions

Licensing status:

- 56 licensed, 1 pending.
- Reminder will be emailed in the next 10 days.

Revenue

Questions:

- 1) Is the state "sweeping" program funds ever a risk? Probably not, as Christmas Tree Grower program revenue balance is seen as a relatively small amount.
- 2) Is state funding available to combat a pest? There are no state level quarantines for Christmas tree pests, so no state moneys would be available. But if a federal quarantine pest hit the growers, federal funding may be available.

Funding history

- No current projects. All are completed, and Gary Chastagner submitted his final report on Managing Adelgids. WSU trees are not sprayed for research purposes. Europe does spray for adelgids. Discussed the balsam wooly adelgid and it's effect on trees. It attacks the needles, not the trunk, causing yellow, distorted needles, and curling of terminal buds.

Current Christmas tree research projects at WSU

Three research projects applied/received by WSU for Christmas tree research through the Specialty Crop Block Program:

- 1) Slug mitigation: Looking at efficacy of hot water treatments and essential oils.
- 2) Noble fir boughs: Three yr project on needle cast fungi and effective controls. Looking at high elevation vs. low elevation boughs and effect on quality.
- 3) Ethylene project: Does exposure increase needle shedding, and testing ethylene blocking materials. Effects on Doug, Noble, Balsam, Turkish & Nordmann fir.

New FY17 funding proposal to CTGAC:

Variation in growth, bud break and needle retention of Turkish & Trojan firs. Principal Investigator: Gary Chastagner. Total amount requested: \$17,466, 1 year.

The committee unanimously voted to approve this request for fiscal year 2017.

Research priorities for funding:

Gary Chastagner brought up that setting research priorities for our funding would be helpful in planning potential projects, and also suggested a potential new applicant for funding: WSU Pullman Professor Jeff Joireman. Does research on marketing and consumer preferences for Christmas trees. Gary suggested he would take requests from the committee.

Legislative update

Brad Tower related that a significant increase in minimum wage is on the ballot in November, with no ag exemptions (Bills 1518 & 1433). Polling results say \$13.50 will pass by initiative.

Hawaii Dept of Agriculture visit

Scott Brooks said Hawaii's Dept of Ag is scheduled to visit in October/November to view our Christmas tree export inspection procedures. Hawaii had zero tolerance last year for slugs and snails (4/20 containers rejected from WA, and 10/100 from OR).

Minutes for 9/16/15 meeting

Carolyn Burres moved to accept the minutes as printed. Committee voted to approve.

Next meeting scheduled for 9/21/16. Possible location: WSU Puyallup campus.